

proper bathing facilities, carefully planned institutions for hydro- and mechano-therapy,—all these are needed, if a resort is to attract people, or if it expects the support of the medical profession.

It is possible that the profession does not thoroughly appreciate the value of our mineral springs. Too often are we apt to attribute the benefit derived by patients at distant resorts to the change of climate, the interesting trip, the freedom from household or business worries or duties, discounting the effect of the waters, often because the drinking of the same waters after they have been bottled, is devoid of results. Recent observations would seem to lend truth to the belief that waters drunk or bathed in, at their source, are better by far than if the bottled product is used. The discovery of radium in many of the waters in the United States as well as in Europe explains why this may be true.

In Europe, the various municipal and state governments have done much to develop their resorts, not only because of the desire to lessen the suffering of humanity, but because of the revenue ultimately derived therefrom. A few years ago, the State of New York purchased Saratoga Springs. It obtained the services of experts to aid in the restoration of the springs which had suffered at the hands of near-sighted commercial interests. It has spent considerable money; it is to-day beginning to reap its reward; physicians are studying its waters; they expect to find that they are as efficacious as those of Nauheim, Vichy, Kissingen, etc. It will not be long before the cardiac, the nephritic, the gouty, the rheumatic, will be taught to "drink and bathe in America first."

In California we have numerous springs. None of them may be said to be properly managed. They not only lack many of the essentials necessary for successful handling of patients, but no attempt is made to run them on a scientific basis. By their extravagant claims and literature, they create distrust rather than confidence in the minds of the profession.

Might it not be well if our most active and very efficient State Board of Health, among its many other duties, took it upon itself to investigate our California springs, and make recommendations so as to induce private interests, or failing in this, perhaps the legislature, to improve our resorts and place them upon a proper basis.

R. B.

FIRST AID COMMITTEE.

Through an error contained in a circular of information which was received in the JOURNAL office, we published a statement in a recent issue of the JOURNAL, giving the erroneous personnel of the Committee on First Aid of the Medical Society of the State of California. The correction is here and now made. The committee appointed by the president of this society at the time, Dr. Harry M. Sherman, is as follows: L. P. Howe, San Francisco, chairman; E. A. Bryant, Los Angeles, and G. J. Bergener, San Francisco.

SOCIAL OR HEALTH INSURANCE.

As will be seen from the minutes of the House of Delegates at the Fresno meeting, published elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL, considerable attention was given to a discussion of this very important subject. The JOURNAL has previously called attention to the fact that in this State a commission to study the whole situation was authorized by the last legislature, and an appropriation of \$20,000 provided for the purpose. The members of this commission are: Miss Barbara Nachtrieb, secretary; Miss Katherine C. Felton, Mrs. Frances Noel, George Dunlop, Dr. Flora W. Smith and Paul Herriott. The American Medical Association, through its Committee on Health and Public Instruction, has created an office at 131 East 23rd Street, New York City, and has placed in charge of it, as Secretary of the committee, Dr. I. M. Rubinow. The purpose of this committee of the A. M. A. is to study thoroughly the whole situation and keep medical men in touch with what is going on. On another page of this issue will be found the first circular of information issued by this committee. The State Society, at the Fresno meeting, authorized the appointment of a committee of the society to confer with the State Commission, which committee is as follows: Dr. René Bine, San Francisco, chairman; Dr. F. F. Gundrum, Sacramento; Dr. Harry M. Sherman, San Francisco; Dr. George G. Reinle, Oakland; Dr. George E. Tucker, Riverside, and Dr. George H. Kress, Los Angeles.

COMMITTEES OF THE STATE SOCIETY.

The president, Dr. George H. Kress, of Los Angeles, has appointed committees as authorized by the House of Delegates at the Fresno meeting, as follows:

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

W. P. Lucas, San Francisco; Harry E. Alderson, San Francisco; Sol. Hyman, San Francisco, and René Bine, San Francisco.

COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE.

C. P. Thomas, Los Angeles, chairman; J. H. Graves, San Francisco; M. R. Gibbons, San Francisco; John C. King, Banning; B. F. Church, San Bernardino, and P. M. Jones, San Francisco.

DIFFICULT SITUATION.

Sometimes the surgeon is confronted by a legal problem of the greatest importance both to his patient and to himself. This is well illustrated in a recent case. The patient suffered from a brain tumor which had so far encroached upon brain tissue as to destroy all memory of recent occurrences, while in no way interfering with past impressions, and threatening loss of sight. To the casual observer he was perfectly sane and he repeatedly refused to consent to an operation. The consultants all recognized that an immediate operation was the only thing offering a possibility of saving his sight and perhaps restoring him to reasonable comfort. What should be done? Should the medical men and the surgeon, realizing the

importance to the patient of surgical interference with as little delay as possible, proceed to operate, or should they respect his irrational objection to the operation and allow the condition to proceed to its inevitably fatal termination? There is only one way in which a situation of this kind can with safety be handled. Application should be made to the superior court for the appointment of a guardian. Almost any judge of a superior court, if the circumstances are properly explained to him by reputable medical men, would appoint a guardian of the person of such patient and such guardian could then authorize the operation. If this is not done, no matter how successful the operation may be, if the patient on recovery saw fit to do so, he could bring suit against the surgeon for trespass upon his person and would be entitled to damages.

MANY THANKS!

May 13th, 1916.

My Dear Dr. Jones:

I have just a moment to spare in which to commend you in the zeal and activity manifested in getting "Dr." Hartland Law squelched in his advertising scheme connected with the State University; a good watchman you are on the tower and your success in this matter indicates that gray matter fearlessly used can triumph over foul smelling millions. May your good work be long felt and as similar things come with passing time I wish you the same success in dealing with them. No doubt the profession in all parts of the state will read with profound interest what you say of the case in the May JOURNAL.

Very sincerely yours,

A. B.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS.

At the Fresno meeting of the State Society a new plan of registration was put into effect. Instead of crowding around and awaiting an opportunity to sign a book, cards were supplied which could be filled out and handed in to the registration clerk. On these cards a space was provided with request for suggestions or recommendations. Something over 350 of these cards were filled out and handed in, and out of the whole number there were four on which, under this space for remarks and suggestions, comment appeared. In one case the suggestion was to change the time of meeting, which is established by the constitution and by-laws and a change in which has on several occasions been discussed by the House of Delegates and rejected. In two cases approval of the proposed indemnity fund was given. The remaining member—and may Heaven shine upon him for all the rest of his days!—merely said that he was satisfied with everything. If some of the members who talk amongst themselves, apparently objecting to almost everything, would only avail themselves of an opportunity of this kind and supply the office of the Society with helpful suggestions, their courtesy in so doing would be highly appreciated. As we have before remarked,

neither the Secretary nor anyone employed by the society happens to be a mind-reader.

A. M. A. DIRECTORY.

The last edition of the American Medical Association Directory was issued about the middle of April, and to anyone needing reference to the names of physicians throughout the United States it is practically invaluable. It is not at all difficult to master the signs and symbols used to indicate connection with societies, specialties, etc., and at a glance one may form a reasonably good idea of the character of a physician in almost any part of the United States. The Association is to be highly commended upon the publication of this invaluable work.

OWNERSHIP OF X-RAY PLATES.

This question has been raised repeatedly and presented itself at the Fresno meeting, as will be seen from the minutes of the House of Delegates. A careful search of the records of decided cases in this country reveals the fact that there has been made no decision covering this point. A few decisions in regard to photographs have been made, and these will be found, together with some comment on the subject, elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL. The matter of having in one's possession an X-ray plate of a fracture or a condition where the X-ray plate offers illuminating information, is of the greatest importance. It should be a fixed rule, never broken by any member of the society, to take or have taken and keep in his possession such X-ray plate or plates. He should not give them up under any circumstances, unless ordered to do so by a court and if such a condition should arise this society will handle the legal end of it.

A. M. A. LIBEL SUIT.

The widely celebrated suit against the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and its editor, Dr. George H. Simmons, by John A. Patten and the Chattanooga Medicine Company, is at least temporarily stopped owing to the death of Mr. John A. Patten. Whether or not the trial of the case will be resumed is uncertain. Mr. Patten died in a hospital in Chicago on April 26th and, as nearly as can be determined by the newspaper reports, from some intestinal complication. Those who have been following the transcript of the testimony, published from week to week in the *Journal A. M. A.*, will have noticed how heavily the case was going against the Wine of Cardui people.

THE "PRACTICAL NURSE" AGAIN.

Another suit for damages for alleged malpractice, which was tried and won by the defendant physician not very long ago, brings out very forcibly the danger to the physician when the patient is cared for by a "practical nurse." It is true that in many cases, particularly confinement cases, the patient cannot afford to employ the services of the trained nurse and therefore engages the